## Colorado State Conservation Board 2007 Matching Grants Project: Prowers Conservation District: Stock Water Development on CRP land

## What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a federal cost-share program developed principally to encourage farmers to keep cover on fragile soils that are prone to erosion. Many CRP acreage enrollments expire in the next two years. The Prowers Conservation District identified the conversion of CRP lands to long-term well-managed rangeland as the best protection for their county's fragile soils. Cost-share of stock water tanks could encourage producers to keep the soils under permanent cover and help enable the best distribution of livestock for sound grazing management. Especially in drought-prone southeastern Colorado, good grazing management is important to prevent soil erosion and weed infestations. In addition, the District saw an opportunity for promoting renewable energy use through installing windmills and solar panels to power the stock water systems. As it happened, after the blizzards of the 2006-07 winter, cost-share was also especially needed to help landowners make investments in the future of their agricultural operations.

## What was achieved?

- The District received applications for projects totaling \$97,620.00 from seven producers. With the grant funds of \$25,000 received, five projects by four landowners were selected by the District Board of Supervisors for funding
- Each of the four producers funded in this grant cycle were required to contribute a hard cash match of at least 50% of funds requested. Project costs were compared to independent cost dockets to ensure they were reasonable. Producers signed cost-share agreements with the District and upon completion turned in receipts for materials and installation costs.
- Project technical design was approved by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Photographs and progress monitoring was completed by the District with assistance on technical specifications by NRCS.
- Installations totaled 28,044 feet of pipeline, 5 hydrants and 4 water tanks. Monitoring of the projects will continue as CRP contracts expire and that land is converted to permanent rangeland.
- Due to the calculated installation locations of the water projects in proximity to adjacent rangeland pastures, producers have already been able to utilize the water sources. This has provided improvements in rangeland health and productivity through grazing rotation that wasn't previously available due to limited water sources.
- This project was described by the Prowers Conservation District as "one of the most beneficial and successful projects in district history". They currently hold a waiting list of \$189,697 in eligible projects from 13 producers.



The drought prone, windy conditions of Prowers County make CRP conversion to rangeland a sound conservation decision for soil protection. Stock water tanks promote managed grazing for range health.

